Debunking the Myth of Money as Motivator in a Multigenerational Workforce

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ABSTRACT

Granting an annual increment is the norm in Asian countries. Organisations spend millions on salaries, hoping for better performance. Undeniably, money is a crucial necessity for all. However, can it motivate every individual to work harder or to perform better at a job? Is the thought that everyone is money driven a misguided perception? This question is becoming increasingly pertinent with every change to workforce demographics as workers of newer generations come on board. With Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y working side by side in the same space, workers are no longer a homogenous group. Today's workforce is the most diverse in history. Hence, the purpose of this study is to explore the truth of the perception that money is a motivator for good performance at work and to discover the actual motivators to work well of each generation. The findings confirm that money is perceived as the motivator for all the three generations. However, each generation is also driven by other specific motivators. With a multigenerational workforce, employers will need to take these motivators into consideration.

Keywords: Baby boomer, Generation X, Generation Y, money, motivator

INTRODUCTION

Salary increments have become the norm in Asian countries over the years. Employees have come to expect a yearly increment as an 'entitlement' in exchange for services rendered for the year. This indicates the perception among employees that a yearly increment is a given regardless of their performance. The scenario is

further aggravated by the meddling of union workers, particularly in Malaysia. A minimum/fixed increment and/or bonus have come to be included in the terms and conditions of a collective agreement signed by the employer and the employee. Compared with other countries, among non-unionised employees, very few, if any, are not awarded this 'entitlement' in Asian countries (Joann & Kemba, 2001). Increments are costly to organisations in the long run. In order to gain a competitive advantage in the global economy, organisations can no longer pass on costs to customers for fear of losing business to competitors. While organisations are treating salary increment as an employee retention tool, millions of dollars are spent on salaries in the hope of improved or better work performance in return. However, it does not seem able to guarantee either better work performance or company loyalty on the employees' part. How far should organisations go and to what extent does money motivate employees to help organisations achieve their goals? This research attempts to answer these questions, considering specifically the two questions below:

1. Is money the primary motivator of all generations when it comes to work?

2. What are the true motivators of each generation to perform well at work?

This research hopes to contribute to the theory of generations and the person-focused plan when rewarding employees by examining these questions through a different lens i.e. by exploring insights into actual and perceived motivators of employees to work hard and well. This theory hopes to add on to the knowledge that the person-focused plan should also take into consideration the special characteristics of the generation the person belongs to in addition to the competencies, knowledge and skills the individual possesses.

Background

Salary is viewed as the most important factor by both genders with 26.5% of urban Malaysians agreeing to this statement. A JobsCentral survey revealed that the happiest employees earn more than RM10,000 per month (JobsCentral [M] Sdn Bhd, 2012). On the flip side, one may ask, "How long would anyone stay in a job that involved just sitting by and doing nothing every day? Would it be more meaningful to stick to one's current job or switch to a stress-free job like cleaning the office with no increment?" Dan Ariely, a professor of psychology and behavioural economics conducted several experiments and revealed that there are other non-pay factors that matter, such as sense of purpose, visible results and receiving acknowledgement of one's effort (Lizard, 2014). Salary or money is indeed important only at the point of accepting a job offer, but it does not seem to have a lasting effect. This is in line with a report published by the Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR®), which stated that 88% of employees resign for reasons other than pay but the irony is that 70% of managers think employees leave mainly for pay-related reasons (Yazinski, 2009)

despite the various motivational theories, such as Herzberg's two-factor theory. Here, it is obvious that the organisation's perception and the actual preference of employees are not in line and skewed. Hence, are organisations focussing on the wrong factor all together? Money may be an important factor, but how far does it motivate the individual? Even if it does motivate some employees can it be said that money is a motivator for all employees? This research hopes to contribute to the theory of generations and the person-focused plan to investigate if there are other factors besides money that motivate employees to perform better at the workplace today.

Employers cannot shy away from the business trends that are shaping organisations today. The top trends in the workplace are changes in workforce demographic, competition, leveraging and economic challenges (Society for Human Resource Management, 2010). Today's workplace is the most diverse in history, with employees from various generations working side by side to achieve the organisation's objectives. This trend will continue for the next 10 years or more (Mencl & Lester, 2014). Workforce diversity also means dealing with multiple perspectives arising from a vast array of backgrounds and life experiences (Clark, 2017; Lee & Tay, 2012) that each generation brings to the workplace. Work profiles are no longer similar across cohorts; this fact indicates that different cohorts of workers may not operate in the same manner (Meriac, Woehr, & Banister, 2010); therefore, a standard motivation programme

may not work for all groups of workers. Because the work environment today is highly competitive, organisations think that employees leave for pay-related matters, as reported by the Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR®) (Yazinski, 2009). Employers need to understand that relying solely on salary and bonuses to motivate employees is an inefficient way of managing employee performance today (Rakyan & Wang, 2017). Employees now are no longer satisfied with the standard programmes that employers believe should work for everyone. Even gender plays a role in what motivates people to be self-employed (Allen & Curington, 2014). When it comes to employee management, generic strategies no longer work. It is time for employers to have a plan that caters for the needs of their employees based on differences in the cohort generation. This approach will allow employers to bring out the best in every employee in order to gain a competitive edge over their rivals.

To remain competitive, organisations use numerous strategies to bring out the best in their human capital. Giving out an annual increment and bonus is the norm in most Asian countries in both the private and public sectors. In South Asia, for example, a yearly increment is almost automatic, except where there has been shoddy work or misconduct (Chew, 1992). A survey conducted by Hays (2014) in Asia for example, reported that only 12% of the employees did not get a bonus. As for their Western counterparts, it is reported that only 15% in the legal industry in San Francisco

get a bonus (Joann & Kemba, 2001). Yearly increments and bonuses sooner or later cut into the profit margin of an organisation. In the year 2012, the yearly increment in Asia ranged from an average of 4.5% to 13.7%, and bonuses ranged from an average of 2.00 to 4.41 months of the regular salary (HayGroup, 2012). Even the Japanese are now considering a flexible wage system (Kuroda, 2006) or a performance-based wage system (Ogoshi, 2006).

However, on the other hand, in order to stay competitive, organisations find it hard to raise the price of their products for fear of losing customers. To keep prices low, organisations have to always look into operation cost. Compensation is the largest single expense in any industry, perhaps constituting more than 80% of expenses in the service industry (The Bureau of National Affairs, 2012). With reference to the Malaysian labour market, Table 1 shows that the services sector is the largest employer of labour, 51% in 2006 and 56% in 2014. Yet, higher salaries may not guarantee better performance and employee retention as some do leave for lower-paying jobs. As Kohn (1993) put it, rewards temporarily change what people do without creating lasting commitment. Hence, it is important to look into the role of money and to leverage on the actual motivators that are shaping today's multigenerational workforce at a time when economic climate is indeed challenging.

Table 1
Malaysian labour market by sector (%)

Sector	2006	2014
Agriculture	13.0%	9.3%
Industry	36.0%	34.7%
Service	51.0%	56.0%

Source: CIA World Factbook (2015)

Theories

Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, the two-factor theory, states that individuals will not be contented with the fulfilment of lower-order needs, which in terms of the workplace, would refer to minimum salary levels, safety and pleasant working conditions. Rather, individuals would look for gratification of higher-level psychological needs, which include achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement and the nature of the work itself. This appears to parallel Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. In this research, the motivators, intrinsic values, were considered as the hygiene factors (e.g. status, job security, salary, fringe benefits, work conditions, good pay, paid insurance, vacations) that do not give positive satisfaction or lead to a higher level of motivation, though dissatisfaction could arise if they were absent. The term 'hygiene' is used in the sense of maintenance factors. These are extrinsic to the work itself, and include aspects such as company policies, supervisory practices and wages/salary.

When it comes to compensation, under the person-focused plan, companies must

recognise differences between employees by paying individuals according to their credentials, knowledge and job performance. This plan should also take social background or the generation the employee belongs to into consideration. Person-focused pay programmes represent an important innovation in compensation. Person-focused pay systems imply that employees must move away from viewing pay as an entitlement. Instead, these systems treat compensation as a reward earned for acquiring and implementing job-relevant knowledge and skills. Advocates of person-focused pay programmes offer two key reasons for firms seeking competitive advantage to adopt this form of compensation i.e. technological innovation and increased global competition.

Generational Differences in the Workforce

A generation is an identifiable group based on birth year; thus, all persons born in a particular generation would share major life events (Kupperschmidt, 2000). A generation generally covers a period of 20 years (Sayers, 2007). Each generation brings with it distinct values, attitudes, behaviour and expectations (Crampton & Hodge, 2007).

Baby Boomers. Baby Boomers were born during the years 1946 to 1964 (Jenkins, 2008) and are the most workaholic among all workers (Berl, 2006; Carlson, 2004; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). They are optimistic by nature and their strong focus on diligence and achievement may

mean that this group has difficulty in balancing work and family life (Dilworth & Kingsbury, 2005; Smola & Sutton, 2002). Their preferred style of working is to reach consensus through seminars and meetings and to embrace team decision. For them, having face-to-face communication is important; they prefer to walk over to their colleague to get an answer to a question (Yu & Miller, 2005) even though accessibility to telephone and email, common tools in every employee's work station, is readily available. This explains the lower usage of communication gadgets by the Boomers as compared to Generations X and Y (Ramasubbu, 2016).

Generation X. Generation X, also known as X-ers or the 13th Generation, were born during the years 1965 to 1980 (Glass, 2007). This generation desires to be self-reliant. They are renowned for planning one or two jobs ahead of their current employment in order to stay ahead. Loyalty to organisation is not a priority to them. They seek challenging jobs and the necessary training to acquire career security, to which they are loyal rather than to job security (Kupperschmidt, 2000). They are comfortable and adapt well to change, including career transformation (Sayers, 2007).

Generation Y. Generation Y, born during the years 1981 to 2001, is the youngest age group in the workplace today. They are also called Millennials, the Internet Generation, Generation Next or the Net Generation (Glass, 2007), dot.com generation (Yu &

Miller, 2005), the N-Geners (Tapscott, 1998) or Generation Me (Becton, Walker, & Jones-Farmer, 2014). This generation is independent and entrepreneurial and demands immediate feedback (Martin, 2005). They would rather send a quick email than have face-to-face communication, unlike Baby Boomers, and this may hinder personal relationship with colleagues, supervisors, direct reports and clients (Glass, 2007). Having high expectations of themselves and their employers are their fundamental trait (Foreman, 2006). Work should be meaningful to them. They also value freedom in performing tasks (Özçelik, 2015). They prefer fast-track leadership programmes, a clear career path, recognition and rewards based on contributions (Glass, 2007). Acknowledging the importance of these traits, one major employer, Citigroup, announced its recruitment plan in 2016 to reach out to Generation Y by providing a rapid path for promotion (Rexrode, 2016). To date, Generation Y is the largest generation in the labour force (Fry, 2015).

Each generation has a different set of beliefs, values and attitudes to work. They have different interactional styles and preferences and may misinterpret words and actions of employees from other generations. These can result in deviation in behavioural patterns as explained Smola and Sutton (2002). These differences among the generations can also be translated as different responses to the same motivator. This research revealed the gap between actual the work motivators and the perceived work motivators that guide each of the three

generations, and looked at the implication of actions taken by management that would allow human resource professionals to benefit from the intrinsic differences among the three geenerations. Hence, the research hypotheses are as follows:

H1: Money is judged as the primary motivator of all generations.

H2: Money is not the actual motivator of all generations.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Face-to-face interviews were carried out, where stratified random sampling was employed for equal representation from each generation cohort. Only Malaysians working in the Klang Valley were taken into consideration. The Klang Valley was chosen as it is the location of Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia. The youngest informant considered for this research was 16 years of age, the minimum legal age to enter the Malaysian workforce.

All the informants were informed of the purpose of the research, the expected duration of the in-depth interview and their right to withdraw from participation at any point of time before the interview began. The sampling method for this research was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Malaya. The participants were not required to disclose any identifying information and they were aware of the ethical consideration of this research for anonymity and confidentiality. The participants were protected, as they were not identified throughout the interview process. Participation was voluntary. Protecting

informant anonymity is one of the methods recommended by Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee and Podsakoff (2003) to reduce method bias as it reduces the likelihood of informants editing their responses to be more socially desirable or consistent with what they think the researcher wants.

Prior to the actual research, a pilot test was conducted to ensure that all the questions were comprehensible. A pilot test of 10 informants was first carried out, and three to four informants from each generation were randomly chosen for the interviews. The informants were given the opportunity to comment on clarity and relevancy of the various statements included in the interview guideline (see the Appendix). Feedback obtained from a pilot test allows the researcher a final opportunity to make changes (Robson, 2002) to the interview items. The results of the pilot study showed that the questions were clearly understood by the informants from all the three generations. These 10 responses were then included in the actual study.

As part of a larger study, 70 interviews were conducted over a period of four months. Sixty-three of the responses were usable; the remaining seven participants withdrew from participation. Griffin and Hauser (1993) suggested that a sample size of 30 informants for qualitative research is acceptable for obtaining a full range or nearly full range of possible vital insights. Out of the 63, 21 were Baby Boomers, 22 were from Generation X and 20 were from Generation Y. The informants were aware that there was no 'right' or 'wrong' answer

to the questions. After a short introduction to the research, they were asked to describe and elaborate on the driving factor that prompted them to work. They were also probed to describe what they believed was the driving factor of their immediate supervisor to work, as their supervisor, whom they always worked with, might come from a different generation. The driving factors recorded from both perspectives were then crossed checked with the generation cohort as the control. To facilitate this, the informants were asked to choose their age range and their respective supervisor's age range based on a generational definition. Each in-depth interview took about half an hour.

Under demographics, one question asked for year of birth to serve as check-and-balance for the generation to which the informants and their immediate supervisors belonged. They were required to choose a range based on generational definition, that is, from 1981 to 1995, 1965 to 1980 or 1946 to 1964. Other demographic questions included the informants' highest qualification attained, job level and tenure in the organisation.

The current research adapted the content analysis, a widely used method for qualitative research, in order to provide insight into human interaction and the relevant variables. Content analysis as a research method is a systematic and objective means of describing and quantifying phenomena (Krippendorff, 1980). The objective is to obtain a condensed and broad description of a phenomenon. Data obtained were first conceptualised, coded

and categorised into concepts, and then categorised into concepts by age group or patterns including immersing oneself in the data as recommended by Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) to identify possible phenomena, inconsistencies and divergent views given by the different generations. The driving factors were then matched based on generation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were 63 usable responses, yielding a response rate of 90%. Out of the 63 respondents, 21 were Baby Boomers, 22 were Generation X and 20 were Generation Y. As society has been placing more emphasis on education over time, individuals from all three generations appear to be willing to invest time and energy into obtaining higher education. The study showed that educational qualification among Baby Boomers was quite equally spread out compared with the other two generations. The Baby Boomers interviewed had attained at least secondary school (24%), a degree or professional (24%) and postgraduate qualification (24%). They had continued to pursue higher education even after starting work or while working. On the contrary, the majority of Generation X had at least a degree or professional qualification (41%). Similarly, the majority of Generation Y had either a pre-university qualification (35%) with the aim to pursue higher education later, or currently held a degree (45%).

When it came to current position held, the majority of the Baby Boomers were Assistant Managers and above (62%) and Non-Executive (33%); those who were capable had moved up to at least the position of Assistant Manager. Generation X, being at the prime working age, was comprised mainly of Assistant Managers and above (54%), followed by Executive or Senior Executive (32%) and Non-Executive (14%). The trend was reversed for Generation Y, as they were still gaining work knowledge and some had yet to complete their education or wished to further their studies. The data concerning employment position reflected the career stage of the participants with regard to their age and in no way reflect on their capabilities or the capabilities of the generation they represented.

A comparison of tenure in the organisation across generations revealed that the Baby Boomers tended to stay longer within an organisation compared with the other two groups. This trend was in line with the report by Florida (2009), who showed that employees under the age of 30 seemed to change jobs once every one and a half years compared with the national average of once every three years. One may argue that it is only natural for Generation Y to stay in an organisation for less than a year as they are young and may not have decided on a career path as yet. However, a closer look at the sample demographics revealed that they tended to stay in organisations for a period of one to less than three years. The following was from the interview with one Generation Y graduate:

> "I have changed four jobs this year and I am looking out now. I cannot stay in the same organisation for so

long. Just do not understand how others do it."

Another Generation Y informant said, "Staying in the same organisation for more than three years is just not me." However, if we were to compare this tendency with the behaviour of the Baby Boomers when they were young, it would be clear that it is very different from their response. Baby Boomers tended to stay longer in an organisation. It was common to hear that they changed jobs fewer than three times in their entire working career. Generation Y tended to change jobs more often than the other two generations (Campione, 2015). If we were to look at the data holistically, employee turnover is a common phenomenon not only in the West but also in Asian countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan, as reported by Chang (1996). HayGroup (2012) reported an average of 13.41% turnover in the Asia region, with Malaysia showing the highest figure, 16.40%, with no further age breakdown. This may be due to the fact that Malaysia has been experiencing rapid economic growth (The World Bank, 2015) but has a shortage of skilled workers (The Malaysian Times, 2015) and a low unemployment rate, ranked fifth lowest in the world (World Finance, 2014). Hence, employees do not stay long in the same organisation.

Organisations cannot run away from generational differences, especially in today's diverse workplace. Employers need to create a work environment that brings out the strengths of each cohort. For this to happen, employers need to identify strategies to draw in the full participation of each generation. They need to bear in mind that certain methods or programmes may only work for certain generations. Hence, this study contributes to the human resource literature and practical implications by examining the work motivators of each generation. Based on the in-depth interviews, several interesting findings emerged as each generation was found to be driven by different work motivators.

The informants were asked about factors that drove them to perform at work, followed by factors that they believed drove their supervisors who may come from a different generation. Supervisors were considered as they play an important role in team performance and participants would be expected to have frequent contact with their supervisors. As expected, informants had a preconceived notion that their supervisors (regardless of which generation they were from) were driven primarily by money. This may be partly due to the materialistic world that we are living in today. However, in actual fact, this was not the case. When informants were asked to state what drove them, money was not included in their list, with the exception of Generation X. For the Baby Boomers, this may have been due to their number, which compelled them to have to compete for jobs throughout their lives; therefore, they were a generation that was easy to please. One interviewee from the Baby Boomer generation said, "Having a job itself is a bonus." In addition, this generation believed that hard work would

help them get ahead of competition. They were believers in lifetime employment; this is in line with the findings of Ansoorian, Good and Samuelson (2003) and Elsdon and Lyer (1999). The attitude of Generation Y, on the other hand, may have partly been due to having both parents working, leading to economic stability in their formative years (Foreman, 2006).

Baby Boomers

As far as the Baby Boomers were concerned, they were generally self-motivated. They felt that it was their responsibility to complete given tasks. This is in agreement with what was perceived as being their driving force. They felt that work was an anchor, and this resulted in their showing a high degree of loyalty to work. Baby Boomers' supervisors can leverage on this characteristic when assigning work to Baby Boomers. Armed with experience, what Baby Boomers need is merely clear deadlines and objectives of the assigned tasks, which can be communicated through face-to-face discussion, their preferred work style (Yu & Miller, 2005).

Generation X

While the other two cohorts perceived that money was their sole motivator to perform, Generation X, while acknowledging money as an important motivator, were not solely driven by money. They also valued good teamwork, which the other two generations may not be familiar with. This means that for them to put in more effort, besides money, members of this generation also

looked for good teamwork. To illustrate further, this generation would remain with an organisation and put in their best effort if they had good teamwork. This lessened the probability of their looking outside the organisation for job fulfilment, which is important to business leaders as Generation X are in the prime of working age. On the flip side, if teamwork were not managed well, causing a team member to leave, others, especially Generation X employees, might follow suit. Generation X either works as a team or if they are unhappy, may leave as a team, which may have an impact on the organisation's ability to reach its goals. Thus, to retain and motivate Generation X workers, leaders need to demonstrate good leadership skills. For example, encouraging team participation in the decision-making process would be a good way to encourage teamwork. Another way to keep track of this would be to look for turnover trend in a section or department of an organisation. If the rate is high, it would be best to have an open discussion to investigate further or include teamwork in the generic key performance index (KPI) for every supervisor as this generation tends to engage in teamwork. In short, employee retention should be a factor in any supervisor's KPI. Involving supervisors in ensuring good teamwork is also in line with the paternalistic management style practised in Malaysia. It is a cultural value that expects the supervisor to take care of subordinates under his or her care.

When it comes to money, employers should ask Generation X workers directly

how much money or what salary they are looking for. This is in line with a study conducted by Cheah, Chong, Yeo and Pee (2015) that found compensation and incentives to be related to commitment among Generation X employees. For existing employees, employers should always look at the total compensation of each employee and explain it to him/her. If the figure is workable, the immediate supervisor, with Human Resource assistance, should map out a career plan for the employee based on his/her current salary while moving towards his/her ideal salary. The career plan must be a detailed and workable development plan, which includes the employee's current strength and weaknesses in line with the current job requirement. The development plan should chart a route for the employee that would move him/her up to the next level until the ideal salary is attained in a specific timeframe. Mapping out the development plan should include listing the requirements for the next level and state clearly to the employee how to move forward i.e. by filling the gaps in the employees' current performance dues to weaknesses so that he/she would be able to perform according to the requirements of the new job.

Generation Y

Generation Y are guided by passion as they see life as being the most important factor. So, catering for their needs requires knowing what their passions are. If they like the job, they will do it. If they do not, they will leave to search for something that can engage their interest. If they feel that their needs are not being met, with the support of a readily available and strong social network, many will join Generation X in embracing home-based entrepreneurship or self-employment as it will provide them with the challenges, opportunities and flexibility that energise them as well as give them the opportunity to explore their passion. Therefore, it is in their best interest to identify their passion during the job interview. It is important for supervisors to relate to the supervisee's passion related to the job and to encourage the supervisee to utilise his/her skills.

In addition to passion, gaining knowledge is also important to Generation Y. Bearing this in mind, organisations may consider making available programmes for the upgrading of skills such as MBA programmes, short courses and skills training. As this generation is highly comfortable with technology (Erickson, 2009), which is their second nature, organisations may consider having online-based training to reduce cost. Online assessment can also be carried out to ascertain the effectiveness of the programme itself. All these efforts are tax deductible for companies. As there are not many Generation Y supervisors as yet, the perceived driving force for the Generation Y supervisor was difficult to ascertain in this study. Nevertheless, both Baby Boomers and Generation X perceived that Generation Y in general were money- and passion-guided. As far as perception was concerned, money was still perceived to be the main driving force, followed by passion. The research findings are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2
Actual motivators and motivators as perceived by others

Generation	What Drives You to Perform?	What Others Believe Drives You?
Boomers	• It is my responsibilities. . Self-motivated	• Self-motivated • Money
Generation X	• Money • Good teamwork	• Money
Generation Y	• Passion • Knowledge	• Money • Passion (as perceived by Baby Boomers and Generation X in general)

CONCLUSION

For a long time, managers have had the misconception that money is the prime motivator of employees and have been using the same retention programme based on monetary rewards and incentives for all employees, only to find that employees are still leaving their organisations. However, there are other factors that employees look for at the workplace. Hence, the importance of this research, which attempted to identify specific motivators based on the generational inclination of workers in order to help employers plan more effectively for more efficient organisational performance. Based on the findings, it is suggested that organisations should apply different strategies when dealing with each generation. Considering the multigenerational composition of today's workforce, employers definitely need to consider the preferences and motivators of the different generations of workers in their organisations. Management techniques play an important role in commitment within the organisation (Okabe, 2005). Thus, it would be good for employers to have a short briefing with employees on the different motivators that each generation values. This awareness is necessary as people from different backgrounds view things differently. Employees should never assume that what is important to them is important to others as well as one man's trash is another man's treasure.

Not much needs to be done for Baby Boomers as they are largely self-motivated. They also feel that they are obliged to perform. Nevertheless, to boost their performance further, organisations could send Baby Boomer workers for training as they might feel that they do not qualify for training as they are approaching retirement age. One interviewee shared:

> "I am about to retire, my company would not want to care much. I have not been going for training for the past five years. My company is only sending those younger employees for training as they have longer time to spend in the organisation. I understand where my company is coming from. It would be a waste of money to send us out for training."

Generation X are concerned about money and good teamwork. Knowing that money is important is good, but employers also need a plan. Leaders should ask Generation X direct questions, especially their attitude and belief concerning money. They should find out what Generation X employees feel they should be earning. If they have a figure in mind, chart out a clear career plan for them on how to qualify for that salary with bonuses added and link the path to organisational goals. The career plan should make clear how the employee can reach that stage. Alternatively, if the employee is eligible for a commission, give him/her the flexibility to decide on the ratio for fixed and variable pay. If money is deemed important, employees will work towards it. This will not only boost the employee's performance but also the organisation's profit. The same question should also be taken seriously during the job interview. If the figure falls too far below the employee's expectations, he/she will not stay long in the organisation.

Based on the findings, Generation Y is driven by passion and knowledge, which is in line with the literature (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005). They are the most educated group of workers among the three generation of workers. During the job interview, employers should ask them what their goals are. If they are hired, have them list down both their personal and professional goals. Guide/train their supervisors to work with them on achieving these goals. To have a healthy working relationship it is necessary to enable employees to fulfil both career and personal goals. When both sets of goals are fulfilled, employees are likely to stay longer as self-actualisation has been achieved.

As shown in Table 3, the largest group within the Malaysian labour force is Generation Y, followed by Generation X and lastly, the Baby Boomer generation. Employers can no longer ignore the reality of a multigenerational workforce. Statistics from the International Labour Organisation, findings from this research and the generational make-up of an organisation are indispensable data for formulating a management plan to establish and sustain a successful multigenerational organisation.

Although it may be rewarding for employees to get what they want, such short-term gratification may reduce their intrinsic interest in their work. Once the threshold is met, they may become distracted. Nevertheless, the bulk of research shows that individuals are given rewards believed to be what they desire in the hope that their interest in and commitment to work are engaged.

Though the research objectives were successfully addressed, one limitation of this research was that the majority of the informants were from the Klang Valley. While the location of the capital of Malaysia, which hosts many workers from all the different states of the country, the Klang Valley is a modern, urban centre, and research deriving its data solely from this area is likely to show urban bias. Residents of urban areas are likely to react to life differently from rural dwellers.

Considering the multigenerational composition of the future workforce of Malaysia, employers definitely need to consider the motivators of these generations (Lee, 2013). Any performance measurement system that seeks to be effective must include financial and non-financial measures (Mohamed, Hui, Rahman, & Aziz, 2014). As this research is statistically controlled for age and year, any differences found are truly generational differences. Future research could consider empirical investigation as this allows for a more valid comparison of what appeals to different generations and allows compilation of a more comprehensive list of possible motivators. Comparison across different cultures should also be carried out.

Table 3
Malaysian labour force by age/generation estimates

Age (5-year age bands)	Generation Estimates	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
15-19	Gen Y	519	498	495	535	523
20-24	Gen Y	1,834	1,857	1,861	2,033	2,091
25-29	Gen Y	2,397	2,415	2,436	2,623	2,708
30-34	Gen Y	1,981	2,126	2,245	2,304	2,299
35-39	Some Gen Y/Gen X	1,613	1,678	1,738	1,781	1,815
40-44	Gen X	1,448	1,509	1,540	1,549	1,555
45-49	Gen X	1,286	1,343	1,362	1,374	1,378
50-54	Some Gen X/Baby Boomers	1,040	1,112	1,138	1,147	1,150
55-59	Baby Boomers	651	717	741	783	780
60-64	Baby Boomers	352	380	376	391	368
Total		13,120	13,635	13,932	14,518	14,668

Source: International Labour Organisation Statistics (2017)

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW GUIDELINE

Objectives:
To identify actual motivators of each generation to develop strategies for performance enhancement.

Scope:
The youngest Malaysian informant was aged 16, the minimum legal age to enter the workforce in Malaysia.

Guidelines for Focus Group

Instruction for Interviewer:
There is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer to the questions. The interview seeks to record perception. Use the following questions as a guideline and circle those that apply.

Part A: It Is All About You.

1. What drives you to perform at work?

2. What drives your supervisor to perform at work (your perception)?

Part B: Your Background

1. Demographic information: Year of birth (Age)
   a. 1946-1964 (Age: 47-65)
   b. 1965 1980 (Age: 31-46)
   c. 1981-1995 (Age: 16-30)
2. Highest qualification attained
   a. Secondary school and below
   b. Pre-university level: STPM/A Levels Certificate
   c. Diploma/Advanced Diploma
   d. Degree/Professional qualification
   e. Postgraduate
3. Designation
   a. Assistant Manager and above
   b. Executive and Senior Executive
   c. Non-Executive

4. Tenure in organisation
    a. Less than one (1) year
    b. One (1) year to less than three (3) years
    c. Three (3) years to less than five (5) years
    d. Five (5) years to less than ten (10) years
    e. Ten (10) years and above

Part C: Background of Your Immediate Supervisor

1. Your supervisor's year of birth (Age)
    a. 1946-1964 (Age: 47-65)
    b. 1965-1980 (Age: 31-46)
    c. 1981-1995 (Age: 16-30)

Thank you!